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ABSTRACT

Educational change is viewed in Australia as a series of events involving four components: the decision to change, the announcement of the change, inservice activities oriented to the change, and informal support activities. Research in the U.S., however, indicates that change is a highly personal process undergone first by individuals and only secondly by institutions and that it entails educators' development of personal feelings and skills related to the innovation. Using the model of the seven Stages of Concern About the Innovation, the researchers found that individuals experience different types of concerns, of varying intensity, at any one time in the change process; that concerns change from one stage to another, although not quickly; and that different institutions have different profiles of concern. Among the implications of these findings are that change implementation approaches concerned only with methods and procedures will probably be irrelevant to educators' personal concerns; that educators' concerns about themselves are normal and legitimate; and that inservice and other support activities should be patterned after each institution's profile of concern and should be planned for several years' duration. (Author/RW)

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The authors claim that inservice and other change activities may be misdirected if they emphasize only the content, tasks, and procedures of a planned change. Such activities will be more purposeful if they emphasize ameliorating the "concerns" of individuals about the planned change and provide support for individuals appropriate to their Stage of Concern. (Ed.)

THE CHANGE DISPLAY: TWO SKYROCKETS, FIVE BUNGERS AND A JUMPING JACK

Leslie R. Eastcott & Gene E. Hall

INTRODUCTION

Most of us, whether we are teachers, principals, vice-principals, college lecturers, or university professors have weathered the storm of change many times. Often it has been hard not to be cynical about what has occurred. For many, "change" has come to be synonymous with something distasteful; for others, an activity to be suffered, firm in the knowledge it will go away eventually. Not a few are disillusioned change agents, frustrated, even bitter, that their attempts at change have come to mean nothing. While attempts at change are not always unsuccessful, the litter of unsuccessful change efforts is piled high on the educational scrap heap. Why is this so?

AN EXPLANATION

Over the past decade the literature has approached this problem in a variety of ways. Change has been explained in terms of the characteristics of adopters (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971); it has been approached from the viewpoint of identifying appropriate change agent behaviors based on systems perspectives (Havelock, 1973); an organizational development perspective has been applied (Schmuck, et.al., 1972); still others have used a case study approach to describe the implementation process or analyze the failure of change attempts (Eastcott & Hine, 1976). In all cases, one of the major assumptions underlying the analyses, or the implications arising from the analyses, has been that change has to be understood as a process rather than event; that change cannot be legislated nor introduced overnight as a result of a series of principal, teacher, regional office, or ministerial decisions.

Just what "change as a process" means, however, has remained vague. The interpretation of the concept of change on the Australian scene characteristically includes the belief that change activity should include the following components:

1. *A decision to change.* Sometimes the decision is ministerial, acting on "best advice"; sometimes it comes from a department of educational administration; often at a school system level it is the result of group deliberations by a variety of experts who reach a major instructional decision; at the school level it may be principal directed or a corporate decision. Once the decision is made, all too frequently the implementation process enters what might be cynically referred to as the "fireworks display".

2. *An announcement of the change* in a manner commensurate with the magnitude of the change and the size of audience. This may take the form of a press release in a local or national newspaper; a report to a Parents and Citizens committee; or an acknowledgement in a staff newsletter. This could be labeled the "skyrocket phenomenon" and is normally accompanied by appropriate gasps of appreciation and disappointment as the case may be. With certainty, it can be claimed that there will be

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supporters, detractors, and those that are impressed but don't know or can't explain why.

3. *One or a series of inservice activities.* Decisions about the content of these tend to be made by those responsible for introducing the change. They appear to have five purposes. First, they play an *informational* role (this is what the change is all about); second, a *content initiation role* (this is what you'll need to know to make the change); third, a *procedural* role (this is how you should do it); and, fourth, an *impact* role (this is what the outcomes should be). Sometimes a fifth role is recognized either separately or more often integrated with others. This is the *motivation* role (this is why the change is great). However, in each case the content of the inservice is oriented towards the *nature of the change itself.*

The assumption appears to be made that participants in inservice will accept the change "because it is good for kids". This "five bunger salute" is a prelude to action. There is suspicion based on experience that this salute is enjoyed by most, but especially by those who plan and implement the inservice. At this point the show is sometimes over and participants retire to their classrooms to institute change. Further activity is usually less formal and not a planned part of the change effort.

4. *A series of informal individual school or teacher initiated support activities* organized to clarify the concepts and behaviors and to assist in planning as the need is perceived. Sometimes these activities are done just to allay good old commonplace fear of the change. This type of activity usually occurs in the afterglow of the fireworks parade and features an expert or experts who jump back and forth across the countryside in response to expressed demand and perceived inadequacies. Thus, the "jumping jack jamboree".

It is easy, of course, to poke fun at these activities and, by implication, to decry the earnestness of the participants, their good will and their desire for improved quality of education. On the other hand, it may do us good to laugh sometimes at the earnestness of our efforts in the cause of education. There is, after all, little evidence yet that inservice education and change in general have lost their spectator sport status.

This is not the point, however. The point is that change is being implemented as a series of relatively discrete events which facilitate the processing of information about the change. Despite these events, critics remain quick to tell us our changes are having undesirable outcomes and even supporters note the lag time between the presentation of new knowledge and change in practice.

A PROBLEM

Perhaps change should be viewed otherwise than as an event or series of events. Work currently being conducted at the Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin suggests an alternative interpretation of the concept of change. In this interpretation change refers to the process an individual goes through as they adopt an innovation. As the result of six years of study of innovation adoption in educational institutions (Hall, et.al., 1977) the conclusion has been reached that:

1. Change is a process, not an event, made first by individuals and *only then* by institutions.

2. For the individual, change is a highly personal experience.

3. A change entails developmental growth in feelings about and skill in using the innovation.

As a consequence, interventions to facilitate change must be related *first* to people and then, and only then, to the content, procedures, methodologies, and impact of the actual innovation. This interpretation of "change as a process" has ramifications for inservice and support activity that represent major shifts in comparison to present practice in the Australian setting.

SOME THEORY

The original idea for this stance emerged from an extensive analysis of the change literature, the wide-ranging experiences of change agents, and especially the research of Frances Fuller (1969). Fuller's research into the concerns of teachers about teaching identified three categories of concern through which teachers progress. These were "self" concerns (What is teaching and how will it affect me?); "task" concerns (The chores of teaching take all of my energy.); and "impact" concerns (What are the effects of my teaching on pupils?). These concerns were subsequently elaborated by UTR & D staff into seven Stages of Concern About the Innovation. These stages are illustrated in Table 1. The concerns represent the various composites of motivation, perceptions, attitudes, feelings and mental gyrations people have about innovations.

A statistically reliable and valid instrument (Hall, et.al., 1977) has been developed to assess these concerns and has been applied to the process of change in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions (Hall, 1976; Hall & Rutherford, 1976; Loucks & Pratt, 1976; Hall, et.al., 1977).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As a result of these analyses of innovations, a number of conclusions have been reached about individuals' perceptions of innovations:

1. Individuals experience a variety of concerns about change at any one time. These concerns vary from individual to individual depending upon knowledge about the innovation, past experience with change, and whether the individual is a user or nonuser of the innovation.

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	STAGES OF CONCERN	EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN
IMPACT CONCERNS	6 REFOCUSING	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 COLLABORATION	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4 CONSEQUENCE	How is my use affecting kids?
TASK CONCERNS	3 MANAGEMENT	It seems to be spending all my time in getting material ready.
SELF CONCERNS	2 PERSONAL	How will using it affect me?
	1 INFORMATIONAL	I would like to know more about it.
	0 AWARENESS	I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

Table 1. Stages of Concern and illustrative expressions of concern about the innovation.

2. Individuals will tend to have more intense concerns at one of the stages, with others being less intense. More intense concern in one particular area than others means that this concern stage will predominate the individual's perception of the change process.

3. As individuals become involved in change, the intensity of concern shifts from one stage to another in a normally developmental sequence. Hall, et.al., (1977), have hypothesized this development in the manner reflected in Figure 1.

4. Not withstanding point 3, it is possible that individuals will become fixated at a given Stage of Concern depending upon their involvement in the change and the context in which they are working. Further, an individual may "regress" in the sequence if some incident or interruption occurs to rearouse previously ameliorated concerns.

5. It is possible to generate profiles of concern for institutions; these profiles differ from institution to institution and differ in patterning over time.

6. Concerns about change are not just something teachers develop. Principals, inspectors, directors, and consultants have concerns, too.

7. Finally, change in concerns is not accomplished quickly. Concerns of those involved in change will not move through all stages in one fortnight. As an example, Hall & Rutherford (1976) found that it took teachers involved in teaming as an innovation three years to reduce their Management concerns about teaming to below the 50th percentile, and only then did their impact concerns about improving teaming begin to show relatively high on the profiles. Plain survival, it would seem, can be a greater occupier of the minds of those involved in change early on. It is not until much later, if at all, that concerns will become aroused at the impact stages of 4, 5, and 6.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Implications of the concept of Stages of Concern for inservice and other support activities are considerable:

1. An implementation approach that initially associates itself solely with content, method, and procedures is likely to be directed at concern areas not personally relevant to those implementing the change.

2. The skill of introducing change is of utmost importance. A change introduced with great fanfare, but with little awareness of the individual needs of those affected will serve only to arouse Stage 2 Personal concerns.

3. The legitimacy of "self" concerns held by those who implement the change must be recognized. The premise, "they're teachers and *should* be concerned with students" is untenable. In other words, it is perfectly all right, in fact normal, for a teacher to have Personal concerns about the change at first. In fact, it should be expected.

4. Inservice agents, consultants, school inspectors should be aware that their Stages of Concern are unlikely to be congruent with those for whom they design, organize and deliver inservice activities. They must be careful to avoid designing activities which match their own Stages of Concern rather than those of their clients.

5. Just as Stages of Concern are patterned, so should inservice and other support activities be. If change is a personal experience and if Stages of Concern vary from teacher to teacher, administrator to administrator, or school to school, then these stages should be used to diagnose, plan, define, and assess inservice which relates to teachers' concerns locally. Thus, inservice and other support activity for change might vary from school to school, and certainly be different for different groups of people with different concerns profiles.[1]

6. A key point related to point 5 is the fact that effective adoption of an innovation takes time, probably several years, and, consequently, many of the Stages of Concern may not emerge for many years. Certain types of inservice and other support, therefore, are unlikely to be relevant in the early stages, maybe even years of the change process. Thus, planning for inservice on a year at a time basis is not likely to address the longer term development of impact concerns.

7. Perfection should not be sought in the beginning of a change effort. Indeed, Hall & Rutherford (1976) point out that for a while things may be worse than they were before the change. Inservice activities should focus on the Stage 3 Management concerns of early users, delaying the impact concern content until use of the new approach is well underway.

How then can stages of concern be identified? Researchers may find the Stages of Concern About the Innovation Questionnaire (Hall, et.al., 1977) valuable. Practitioners, while still having to ground themselves in concerns-based theory, will find less formal methods more acceptable. Two such methods are available. Hord's (1978) "one-legged conference" involves causal questions being asked of the Teacher in an interview. Despite its drawbacks, this method does give a guide to the teacher's present Stage of Concern. Newlove & Hall's (1976) Open Ended Statement method, requires written re-

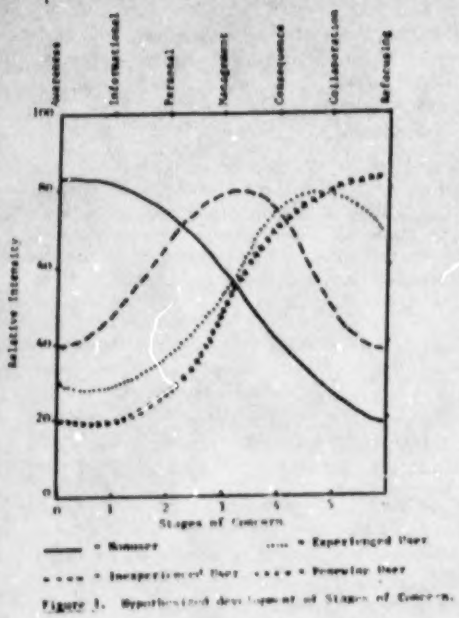

Figure 1. Hypothesized development of Stages of Concern.

sponses to the question: "When you think about *(innovation 'x')*, what are you concerned about? Do not say what you think others are concerned about, but only what concerns you *now*. Please be frank and respond in complete sentences". Using the full definitions of Stages of Concern, each statement can be scored. The need for familiarity with the conceptual background to the model before using this approach is worth reiterating.

CONCLUSIONS

The point to this article is quite simple. There appears on the Australian scene to be increasing acceptance of the idea that change in education is a process not an event. However, it is less certain that change activity is built upon an appropriate understanding of the notion of the process. It appears that change as a process has been interpreted to mean the process of implementing change with a consequent emphasis on content, task and procedure as related to the change itself. The suggestion here is that change is a process associated with individuals. Before an institution can implement an innovation, the individuals within the organization must adopt it, accept it, and be comfortable with it. Thus, individual concerns are a very important part of change. If our inservice and other support activities fail to acknowledge this in their design and implementation, then change as a process might be like the fireworks display described earlier. After the flashing light has subsided, the noise abates and the smoke clears only despondency at its brevity and transitory nature remains.

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1. A table indicating the different activities that might occur in different Stages of Concern, is available from the authors.

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